inducement to deter Islamabad from conducting nuclear tests;;

(b) if so, the details of the package; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b)
there were media reports that in order to dissuade Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests, the US may offer to Pakistan military and economic aid. Such assistance is presently restricted under US domestic laws, namely the Pressler Amendment.

(c) Pakistan has since conducted nuclear tests, and the US has imposed sanctions in addition to those already in place under the Pressler Amendment.

U.S. President's Statement on Nuclear Weapons

2498. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement of the US-President made on the eve of the P-5 meet of the Security Council held in first week of May, 1998;

(b) whether in this statement the US-President referred to the progress made over the past years in reducing stock piles and containing the spread of nuclear weapons and if so, the details of the progress made in this direction as referred to by US President; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto by way of taking steps for improving the security environment in the South Asian Sub-continent and towards world peace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) On June 3, 1998, President Clinton stated that the United States and Russia are in the process of reducing their strategic nuclear arsenals by two-thirds, from the levels existing during the height of the Cold War, under the US-Russia "Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms" (START Treaties). President Clinton also briefly highlighted the various non-proliferation steps, such as the indefinite extension of the NPT and the signing of the CTBT. Under the 1993 START II Treaty, the United States and Russia will cut own their deployed startegic nuclear warheads to 3000—3500 each. These reduction are to be carried out by January 1, 2003 AD. However, at the global level, there is no evidence as yet on the part of the nuclear weapon states to take decisive and irreversible steps in reducing their reliance on nuclear weapons and moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world.

(c) India enjoys a consistent record as a responsible member of the international community and a pioneer and leading participant in the movement towards global nuclear disarmament At the global level, India has, individually and collectively with other like minded countries, put forward a number of intiatives intended to move the process forward including an Action Plan for creating a nuclear-weapons-free-world. More recently, India has welcomed the Joint Declaration, issued on June 9, 1998, by the Foreign Ministers of eight countries entitled "Towards a Nuclear-weapons-free-world. The Need for New Agenda". India has declared its readiness to cooperate closely with this initiative aimed at establishing a nuclear-weapon-weapon-free world in the coming millennium and the establishment of an equitable, non-discriminatory, non-violent and lasting international security order. With the objective of reducing tensions in

the sub-continent, Government has announced a series of measures. These include: (i) India will observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting further tests. India is also willing to explore ways and means, in moving towards a de jure formalisation of this declaration, (ii) India is ready to discuss a no-first-use agreement bilaterally with Pakistan, as also with other countries, bilaterally or in a collective forum, (iii) India has made clear its readiness to engage in multilateral negotiations on a Fissile Materials Cut-Off- Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and (iv) India has no intention of engaging in a nuclear arms race.

Bodies of Indians Dying in Gulf Countries

2499. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER of be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government propose to take to bring back to India the bodies of Indians, dying in Gulf countries, as the disposal of non-Muslims are not allowed in some of those countries; and:

(b) whether Government would consider making some arrangements in this regard to help the relatives of the deceased taking into account the considerable delay in getting the dead bodies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) as per the practice prevalent in the Gulf countries, the bodies of deceased Indian nationals are transported to India at the expense of the foreign employers/ sponsors as per the obligations stipulated in their employment contracts. This arrangement has been found to be working satisfactorily.

(b) The delay in transporting the dead bodies to India is attributed to the requirement to comply with stringent local procedures. In cases of natural death, the repatriation of the body of the deceased person could take upto six weeks. In cases of accidents, suicides, murders etc., the delay could be much longer, since police investigation by the local authorities is a prerequisite and, until this is completed, other formalities such as the local District Governor's clearance, attestation of relevant documents etc., cannot be undertaken. On receipt of information regarding the death of Indian nationals, the Indian diplomatic Missions/Posts in the Gulf countries liaise with the family members and employers/sponsors to facilitate expeditious procedural clearances and repatriation of India of the mortal remains of the deceased.

U.S. Firm's Help For Nuclear Facility

2500. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "US firm's help for Pak N-facility irks India" as reported in the Statesman dated the 4th May, 1998;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that a US firm has been actively helping Pakistan to develop new nuclear weapon testing facility; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government to such deals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) Government had clarified in a statement on the subject that India has continuously monitored trends, acquisitions and developments in nuclear and missile related activity by countries in our region. It has been India's assessment that Pakistan's pursuit of its clandestine nuclear weapons and missile programme continues unabated despite the declared efforts of many countries.

(c) Our concerns regarding these reports have been conveyed to the Government of the United States.